IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 33 without prejudice, and amend the claims as follows:

1-28. (Cancelled)

28. (Currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ for extracorporeal ~~manipulation,~~ depletion, [and/]or removal of ~~soluble, suspended components or cellular blood components~~ tumor necrosis factor receptor (TNFR) from blood or blood fractions comprising the following steps:
    a) Optional separation of the blood into one or more blood fractions with solid [[and/]]or liquid components;
    b) Binding of ~~soluble, suspended, or cellular blood components of~~ the blood or the blood fractions expressing TNFR to a surface or particle coupled to a polypeptide wherein the polypeptide comprises at least three components A and at least two components B, wherein each component A ~~is a monomer of a member of the TNF ligand family~~ comprises a tumor necrosis factor (TNF) monomer or a functional fragment [[and/]]or a functional variant thereof, and each component B is a peptide linker, under conditions allowing binding of TNFR in the blood or the blood fractions to the surface or the particle; and
    c) Separating ~~Optional separation of~~ the bound ~~soluble, suspended, or cellular blood components~~ TNFR from [[of]] the blood or the blood fractions, thereby depleting or removing TNFR from the blood or the blood fractions.

29. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein before step a) or b) blood is taken from a patient.

30. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein after a step b) or c), the ~~thus treated~~ blood or blood fraction is injected or reinjected into a patient.

31. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein components A are identical or different.

32. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein ~~components A stem~~ the blood or the blood fraction is from the same organism or different organisms.

33. (Cancel)

34. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein components B each link together two of the at least three components A.

35. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein at least one of components B has the amino acid sequence $(GGGS)_3$ or $(GGGS)_4$.

36. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein components A and components B form a trimeric protein structure.

37. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 36, wherein components A and components B form a homotrimeric protein structure.

38. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 36, wherein components A and components B form a heterotrimeric protein structure.

39. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein components B are identical or different.

40. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein components B are [[stem]] from the same organism or different organisms.

41. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein the polypeptide has an ~~a preferably~~ N-terminal tag sequence~~, particularly a His tag sequence or a Flag tag sequence~~.

42. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein the polypeptide has an ~~a preferably~~ N-terminal leader peptide sequence.

43. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 28, wherein the polypeptide ~~has at least one other~~ further comprises component C, ~~which is~~ wherein C comprises an antibody fragment or a different protein or peptide, which selectively recognizes a specific target molecule on a [[the]] cell surface.

44. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 43, wherein component C is an antibody fragment from a mammal~~, particularly of murine or human origin, or a humanized antibody fragment~~.

45. (Currently amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 43, wherein the antibody fragment ~~can be present in different antibody formats, e.g., as~~ comprises scFv, ~~particularly scFv40~~.

46. (Withdrawn) Method according to claim 43, wherein component C is a protein or peptide with specificity for a cell surface molecule, particularly a cytokine receptor, a growth factor receptor, an integrin, or cell adhesion molecule.

47. (Withdrawn) Method according to claim 46, wherein the cytokine receptor is selected from the group of the TNFR gene family.

48. (New) The method according to claim 41, wherein the N-terminal tag sequence is a His tag sequence or a Flag tag sequence.

49. (New) The method according to claim 44, wherein the mammal is human.

50. (New) The method according to claim 44, wherein the antibody fragment or antibody derivative is a humanized antibody or antibody fragment.